

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application as amended is respectfully requested.

The claims have been renumbered pursuant to the Examiners 9/8/03 Office Action to remove the gap between original claims 7 and 9. Renumbered claims 2-22 are pending. Renumbered claims 2-7, 19 and 21 are cancelled by this amendment. Renumbered claims 8-18, 20 and 22 are currently amended, with claims 11-17 and 22 amended solely to correct the claim numbering. Support for the amendments can be found throughout the specification. No new matter has been added.

1. Applicants appreciate the Examiner's acknowledgement of allowable subject matter in claims 2-7, 10-17 and 19-21. However, Applicants have cancelled claims 2-7 and 21 of the present application and consolidated the limitations of the claims into related application no. 10/153,340 to alleviate the provisional obviousness type double patenting rejection in application no. 10/153,340.

2. Renumbered claims 8, 9, 18 and 22 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention.

Applicants have amended claim 8 to provide antecedent bases for "the filter" and amended claim 9 to provide antecedent bases for "the liquid based medium". The Examiners rejection of claim 22 arose from its dependence on rejected claim 8. As discussed, claim 8 has been amended to overcome the Examiner's rejection with respect to 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph. Thus Applicants believe the Examiner's rejection with respect to claim 22 has similarly been overcome.

Applicants traverse the Examiner's rejection with respect to claim 18.

The term strip is not vague and indefinite; the scope and meaning of "strip" would be understood by a person of ordinary skill in the art because the term has its ordinary meaning and is disclosed and described in the specification at pages 22-23 and in Figure 7. See S3 Inc. v. nVIDIA Corp., 59 USPQ2d 1745 (Fed. Cir. 2001) ("[the claims] are not invalid for indefiniteness, even though claims are not self-contained expressions of every step, since person of ordinary skill in field, viewing claims in light of specification, would understand meaning and scope of data streams as set forth in claims").

Notwithstanding the foregoing remarks, Applicants have amended claim 18 to further define the claimed "strip".

In view of the foregoing amendment and remarks, applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection of claims 8, 9, 18 and 22 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

3. Claim 18 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being clearly anticipated by Office Depot 2000 catalog. Applicants have amended claim 18 to include means for holding the absorbent material and means for removeably mounting the strip to the cover. The Office Depot 2000 catalog lacks a disclosure of any of the means for performing these functions as disclosed in the specification at pages 22-23 and in Figure 7. Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102(b).

CONCLUSION

Based on the foregoing remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the claims

as currently pending are patentable and in condition for allowance.

In the event that a telephone conference would facilitate prosecution of the instant application in any way, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the number provided.

Favorable consideration is respectfully requested.

AUTHORIZATION

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for consideration of this paper to Deposit Account 13-4500, Order No. 2629-4016US1. A DUPLICATE COPY OF THIS SHEET IS ATTACHED.

Respectfully submitted,
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Dated: December 5, 2003

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